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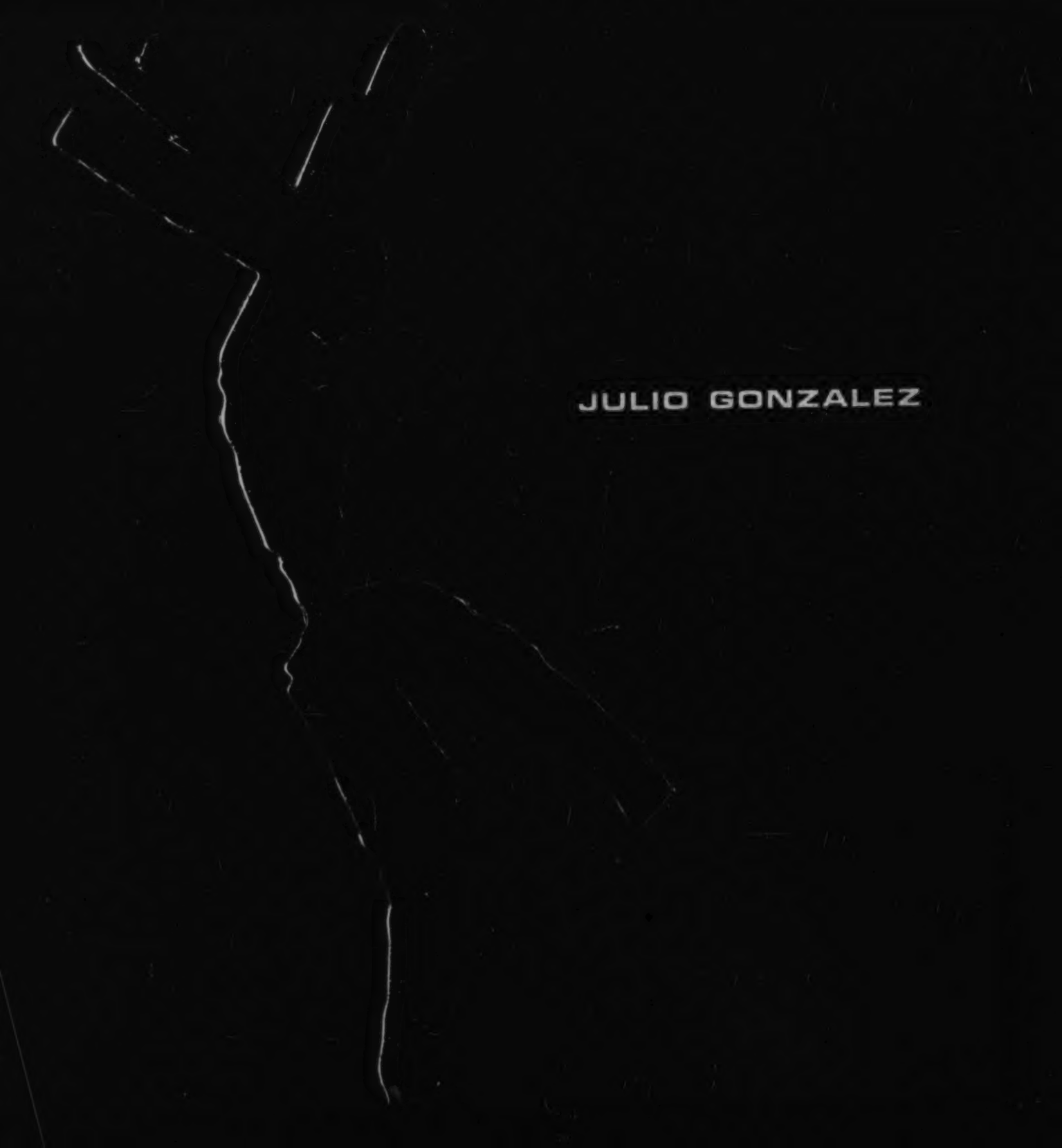
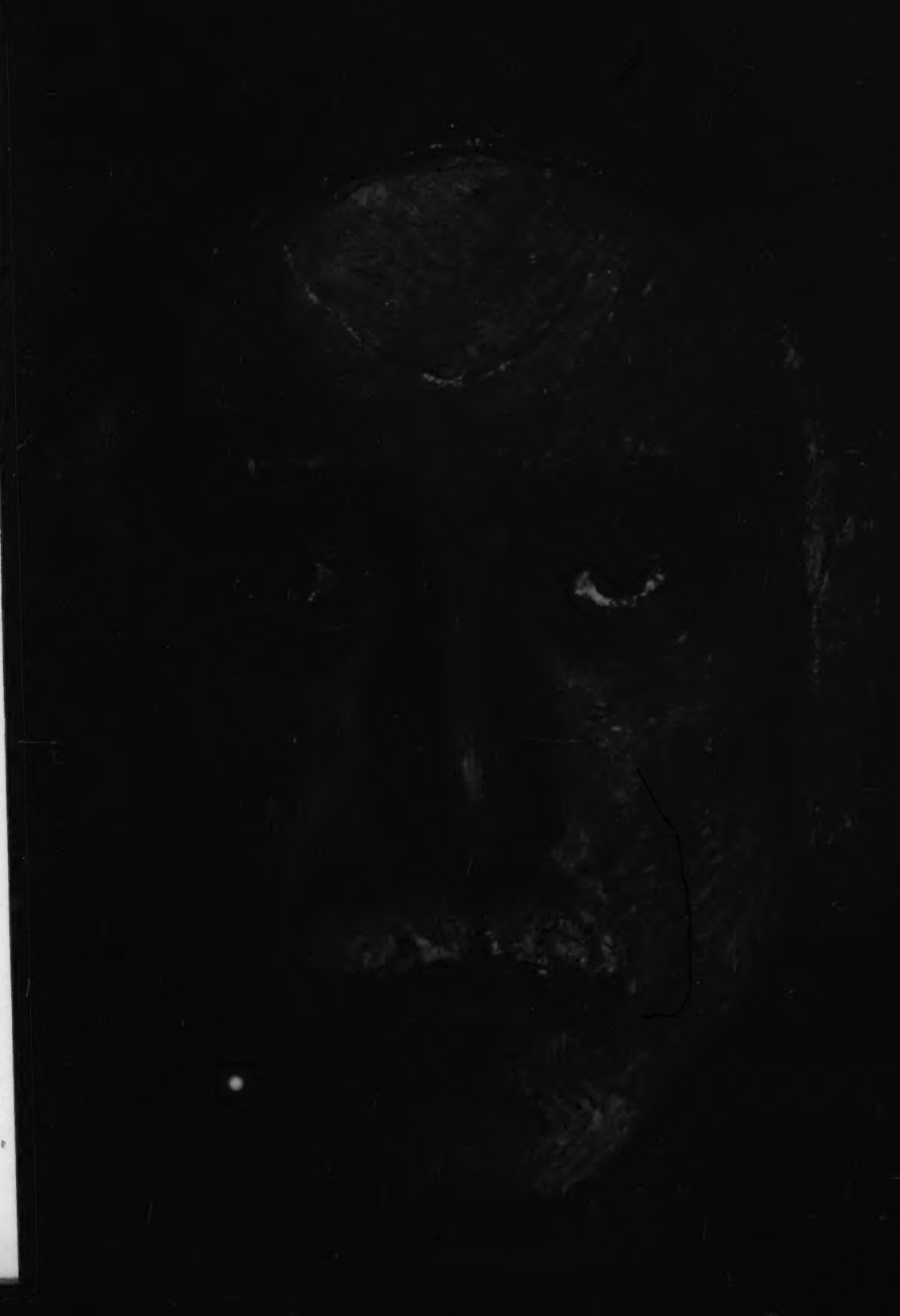


JULIO GONZALEZ



Julio Gonzalez:
Selfportrait

Cover: Little Dancer 1935 Bronze 6¹/₄"

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1961

JULIO GONZALEZ

GALERIE CHALETTE

1100 MADISON AVE. NEW YORK

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3 Anxious Mask
1912–1914

Acknowledgements

The Galerie Chalette is deeply indebted to Mme Roberta Gonzalez for making this exhibition possible. Mme Gonzalez has not only made available her collection of her father's work, but supplied valuable information and data regarding the artist and his œuvre.
We are grateful particularly to Mr. Hans Hartung for the loan of several sculptures from his private collection.
Special thanks are due to the Galerie de France for their devoted assistance in assembling the material.

To project and design in space with the help of new methods, to utilize this space and to construct with it, as though one were dealing with a newly acquired material—that is all I attempt.

Julio Gonzalez

6 Mask of Roberta 'in the Sun' 1927

GONZALEZ IN PERSPECTIVE

By Hilton Kramer

Six months from now, on March 27th, 1962, we shall observe the twentieth anniversary of the death of the Spanish sculptor Julio Gonzalez in the suburb of Arcueil, outside Paris, at the age of sixty-five. Two decades that have been eventful in the history of sculpture separate us from that dark moment when, in the midst of a terrible war and at a time when the whole foundation of culture and humane civilization seemed to be crumbling, Gonzalez was buried in the presence of Picasso and a few other survivers of the Nazi occupation of Paris. Between the close of Gonzalez's amazing career at that grim hour and the artistic concerns of the present moment a whole new epoch has intervened. New methods, new philosophies, and new reputations have established themselves at the critical center of the international art scene. New institutions and new doctrines have altered our attitude toward the past and left us less certain and more troubled about the future of art—as well as of our own lives. In particular, the sense of art that came to a brilliant and radical fruition in the modern movement in Paris has been subjected to a severe scrutiny. Theory and practice have united in throwing new light on what had so recently been considered an unexceptionable aesthetic attitude. Received ideas about the nature of the artistic enterprize itself have been greatly transformed in the historic interval since Gonzalez's death. The dogmas that prevail among us today are no longer those that reached their zenith in the halcyon days of the School of Paris, but—such are the dialectics of the artistic mind—they remain attached to this Parisian past as irrevocably as a grown man remains the ineluctable offspring of the parents who gave him life.

Of the links that join the art of the postwar era to the period preceding the Second World War, none stands out with greater clarity or strength than the sculptural œuvre executed by Gonzalez in the 1930's. His work is at once a startling and original epilogue to the history of Cubism and a crucial turning point in the modern history of sculpture. It forms a dramatic chapter in the development of the School of Paris and is part of that larger (and as yet unwritten) history of Spain's contribution to the modernist adventure. Gonzalez was an originator of a method and a style as well as its principal exponent in Parisian art. He brought the medium of open-form, direct-metal sculpture to a high point of refinement and sophistication, and he became by virtue of this achievement the instigator of a syntactical revolution whose sculptural progeny has filled our artistic life with some very powerful work in the past fifteen years. His work is thus one of the key sources of current art and at the same time a living memorial to one of the most sensitive personalities in the modern period. Gonzalez is both a pioneer and a part of the living present; his work is at once historical and contemporary. In some respects it seems fully completed and in others it remains open to the future in its possibilities and problems.

His œuvre, together with the tragic life and complex sensibility that stand behind it, can scarcely be comprehended without an appreciation of this continuing double status, and it may be for this reason that relatively little art-historical research or useful critical writing has been devoted to Gonzalez in recent years. His central position is everywhere acknowledged, yet his importance—if one may judge from the paucity of serious literature on the subject—has not been defined. It is as if our critics and historians recognized that the full implication of Gonzalez's art is far from being exhausted, and for once, have hesitated to press their attention on a body of work that is still being studied and used by a large number of gifted and productive artists. Gonzalez is therefore one of the few major figures to emerge from the prewar School of Paris whose artistic significance has been recorded more fully in the work of younger artists, both in Europe and America, than in the crowded shelves of our monographs, picture books, and reviews. It is not an unhappy fate for a serious artist, and one may even find a certain historic justice in the fact that this sculptor who

7 Little Baroque Mask 1927

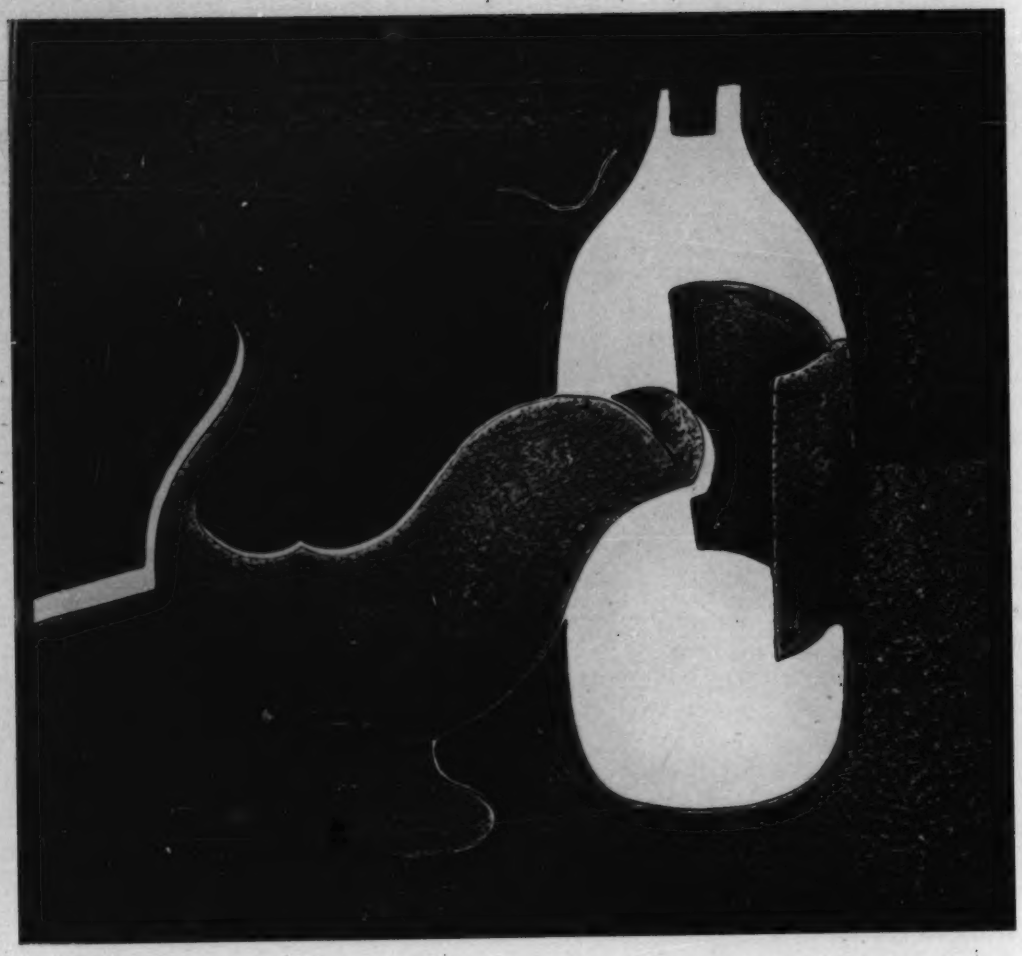
11 Kneeling Woman
1929

8 Little Maternity
1927

arrived late at his characteristic style and vision has not been hurried off-stage in the hurly-burly of the postwar art scene, to be buried with glory, tact, and indifference in the cemetary of our art histories, but has been granted a second life, as it were, in the resurgence of his ideas that has clearly taken place in the sculpture of the last decade and a half.

Gonzalez was born in Barcelona, on September 21, 1876, into a close and gifted family. His father Concordio was a well-known goldsmith and sculptor, and Julio, like his brother Joan, seven years his senior, was trained in metal-craft as a boy. The daughters of the family, Pilar and Dolores, also assisted their father in the atelier that produced decorative work in bronze and iron. It was thus a family of skilled and productive craftsmen and artists. Their metal work was shown frequently at the Barcelona Expositions in the nineties, and the family was very much part of Barcelona's art life at the time. Julio's daughter Roberta later noted in a memoir of her father that "My grandfather (Concordio) himself devoted all his leisure time to drawing and sculpture, and the best-known artists of Barcelona would gather in his atelier." In 1893, when Julio was seventeen and his brother Joan twenty-four, they exhibited metal work at the Chicago World Exposition. It was in the early nineties, too, that the brothers studied painting at the Barcelona School of Fine Arts. Barcelona was at this time the cultural and artistic capital of Spain, and a city of political and intellectual ferment. Ibsen, Wagner, and Nietzsche were in vogue in the sophisticated literary world; Böcklin, Puvis de Chavannes, Maeterlinck, and the Pre-Raphaelites were influencial with a generation that was at the same time discovering El Greco and reading Ruskin, Tolstoy, and Kropotkin with fervid interest. The architect Antonio Gaudí, himself a conservative Catholic, was building the great Sagrada Familia—Mr. Andrew C. Ritchie suggests that Gonzalez worked on this church sometime in the nineties—while movements of liberal and anarchist political feeling were manifesting themselves in mass strikes and acts of political terrorism.
There was a flourishing artistic bohemia in Barcelona in this period that felt a close kinship with the anarchist philosophy, and in the late nineties it more or less centered in a new cabaret, called Els Quatre Gats, whose

13 Pensive Face
1929



12 Still Life 1929

walls were often covered with the paintings and drawings of Isidor Nonell and where the young Picasso—not yet twenty—found a milieu more congenial to his interests than the academic atmosphere of the School of Fine Arts in which his father had been installed as a professor in 1895. Apparently Gonzalez, who was five years older than Picasso, remained very close to the family circle and did not move in this bohemian milieu, for it was not until he moved to Paris in 1900 that he met Picasso—a meeting that ultimately proved fateful for both. Characteristically, it was a family move. Whereas Gris, for example, had left Madrid by himself after selling everything he owned (including his bed and mattress) and arrived alone in Paris with a few francs in his pocket, and Picasso simply removed himself from the bohemian world of Barcelona to its larger and more active prototype in the French capital, Gonzalez's move to Paris came as part of his family's decision to leave Spain and set up housekeeping in France. Gonzalez's father died in the late nineties, and after a short period in which Joan Gonzalez ran the family workshop, the family sold the business, and all of them—Concordio's widow Pilar, the daughters Pilar and Dolores, and the sons Joan and Julio—moved to Paris. It was anything but the usual personal rebellion against family life and conventional values.

Is there perhaps a key to Gonzalez's late development as an artist in this prolonged attachment to his immediate family? If so, the creative side of this family relationship must also be weighed into any final estimate of Gonzalez's artistic evolution. Gonzalez was one of those rare, privileged men whose adult creative life forms a continuous development with the values absorbed from a talented and productive father. One thinks of the Yeats brothers, of William and Henry James, of Charles Ives and Picasso himself—brilliantly endowed sons of fathers who were extraordinary in having every gift but genius and whose sons lived to fulfill their promise on a level the fathers themselves could scarcely conceive.

In Gonzalez's case, there was the additional factor of a particularly close attachment to his older brother Joan, whose death in 1908 precipitated the crisis in Gonzalez's life from which he did not fully emerge until sometime in the twenties. Joan Gonzalez had known Picasso in Barcelona, and it was he who introduced the younger Spaniard into the Gonzalez's Paris household

16 Pointed Head 1930

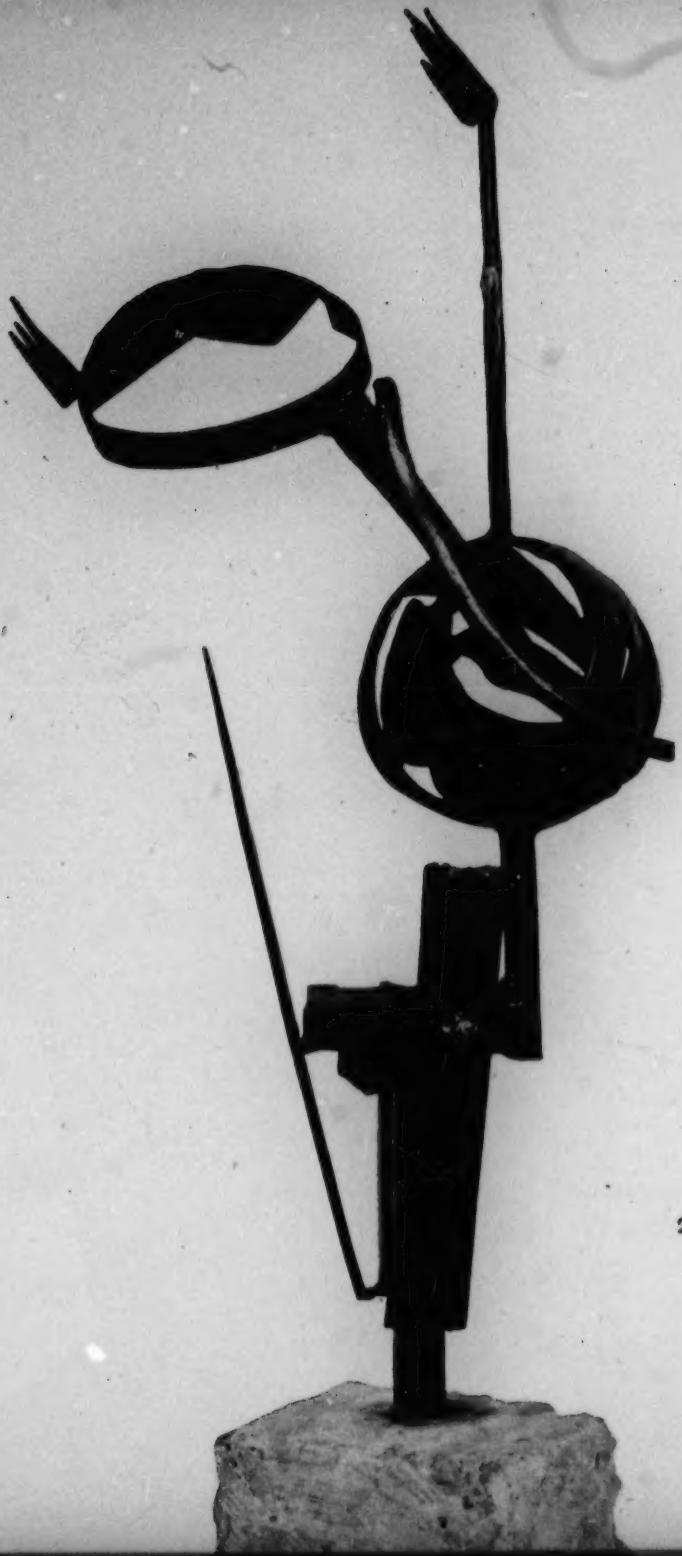
61 Abstract Head (Pendant) 1936

20 Head of 'Oncle Jean' 1930

in the Avenue du Maine. The brothers moved for a while in the circle of Picasso, Manolo (who had also come from Barcelona), Max Jacob, Maurice Raynal, and others. It should be remembered that both Julio and Joan were beginning to establish themselves as painters in this period, the former in a delicate, conventional style that owed much to Degas and Puvis de Chavannes. Both showed their work in the Salon des Indépendants and the Salon d'Automne.

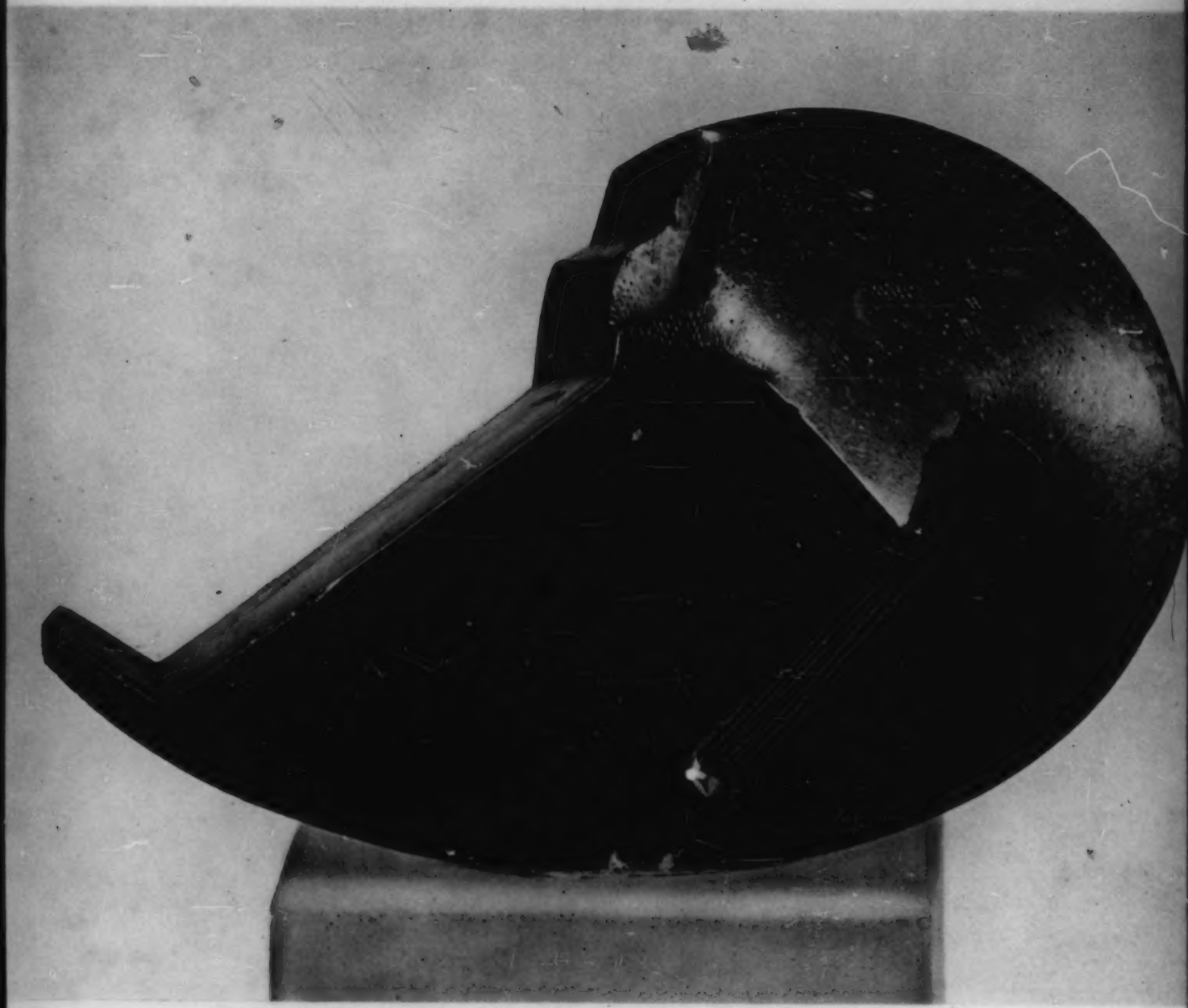
Overshadowing these early years in Paris was the illness that had prompted Joan Gonzalez to give up the family workshop in Barcelona. Two years before his death he returned to Barcelona with his sister Pilar, hoping the Spanish sun would help cure him, and there were many visits back and forth between Paris and Barcelona until death came in 1908. Mme Roberta Gonzalez has recorded the effect this event had on her father and his subsequent life in Paris: "Early in 1908 my uncle died. My father was overwhelmed at the loss of the brother who had meant so much to him. With him he lost a rare and precious friendship, one for which he would never find an equivalent. My father could not offer full resistance to his grief. He abandoned his work for many months, refused to see his friends. He quarreled with Picasso. Finally, circumstances took him from an avant-garde milieu into one that was more 'well-behaved'. It was then the long period of solitude began."

During the First World War Gonzalez worked in the Renault factory where he learned the use of the oxy-acetylene torch. He had already acquired a craftsman's mastery of iron in his father's workshop. He was an experienced painter, sculptor, and draftsman, and his acquaintance with Picasso had put him in touch with Cubism from its beginnings, though there was to be a long interval before he felt inclined to follow its lead. (Picasso's great Cubistic sculpture, the "Head of a Woman", 1909, had actually been modeled in Gonzalez's studio.) Their friendship was renewed after the war, apparently at Picasso's prompting, and the latter became (in Mme Gonzalez's words) "without doubt my father's best friend." Thus, if Gonzalez had not yet recovered his full strength as a man and an artist in the early twenties; if



23 The Dream 1931

71 Drawing
for Sculpture
1936



17 Reclining abstract Head 1930

18 Spanish Mask 1930

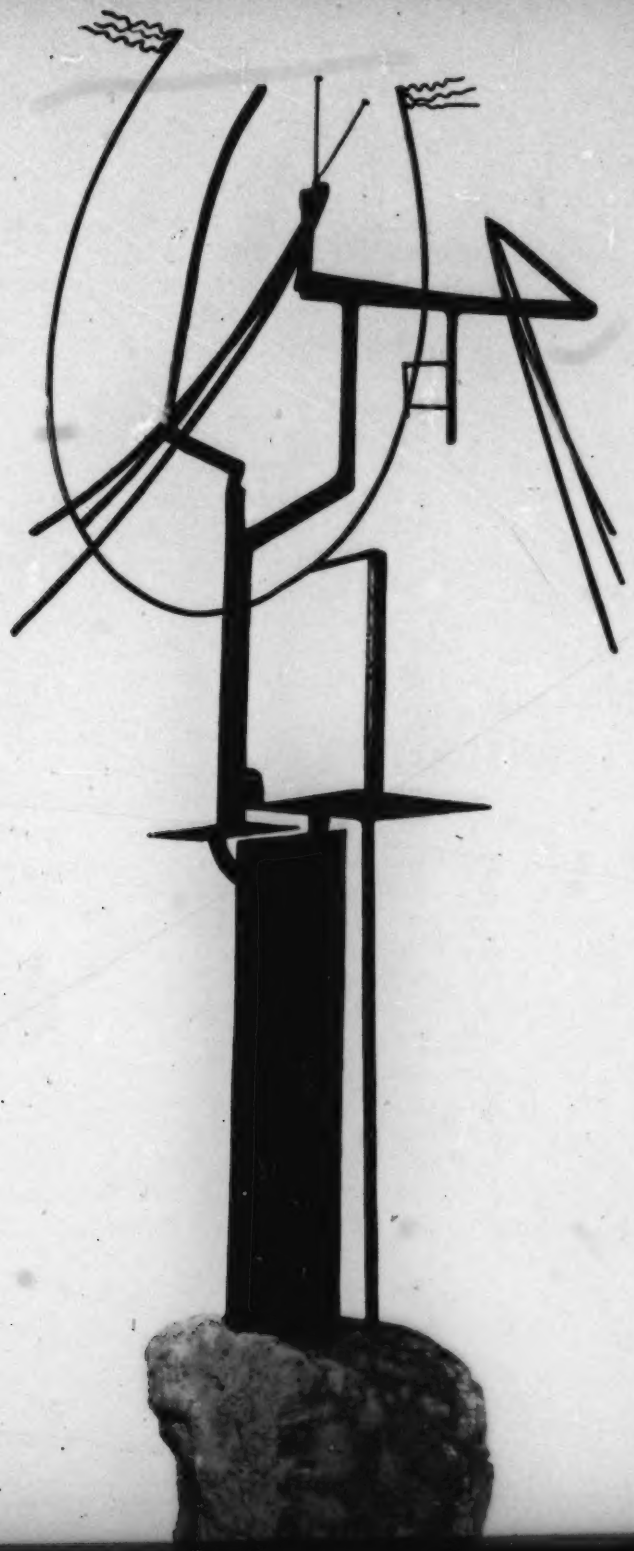
he continued to live a shy and tortured life and to practice a hesitant and unrealized art, he had nonetheless acquired the technical experience and established the personal and artistic connection that would in a few years lead to the creation of an entirely new style. As the twenties unfolded, he was moving toward the moment when his creative powers would finally be unlocked.

That moment came when Picasso asked Gonzalez's help in making some iron sculpture in the late twenties or early thirties. The exact chronology of this collaboration has never been established. M. Kahnweiler locates it as having taken place in 1930-32; Mr. Roland Penrose, in his recent biography of Picasso, suggests it followed on Picasso's move to Boisgeloup in 1931, whereas Mme Giedion-Welcker gives 1928 as the date of Picasso's "Design for a Construction in Iron Wire". Whatever its precise date may be —and for all our detailed information on Picasso's development, this remains an interval on which he has not cared to cast much light—the significance of this collaboration is altogether clear. It altered the course of sculpture for the next thirty years.

One can only speculate on what it meant to the two men themselves. In 1930 Gonzalez was fifty-six years old; Picasso, forty-nine. Twenty years earlier Picasso had formed the friendship with Braque which resulted in the creation of Cubism, and his art had never again attained the purity and serenity that marked his achievement in that period of collaboration and search. The postwar art world of the twenties was a vastly different milieu, and it cast Picasso into the public and slightly mythical role that has taxed his creative work so severely ever since. For Gonzalez, two decades of hesitation, withdrawal, and self-doubt had passed since the death of his brother. Is it too much to suggest that in their fruitful and ramifying collaboration of the early thirties the one found a co-worker in whose presence he could abandon his public stance and recover his seriousness—and an artist, moreover, whose sensibility and craft could act as a brake on his own free-wheeling inventiveness—while the other regained in some way the lost brother of his youth?

Whatever its personal meaning may have been, their work together constitutes a chapter in the history of modern sculpture that is as central as Picas-

26 Head of the 'Little Montserrat'
1932



25 Woman Combing her Hair 1931

so's earlier collaboration with Braque had been in the development of painting. It was only Picasso's failure to follow through on this achievement that kept his public slightly blind to the fact—that, and the irony we scarcely dare face: that the man who has been so celebrated for his individualism, for the heroism and singularity of his genius, may after all have reached the two greatest moments in his career when he was able to submit his talents to the discipline and sensibility of colleagues who were less reckless and more detached in their approach to art.

For Gonzalez the encounter had a completely transforming effect. Suddenly there is a confidence and conviction in his work that are entirely new. (It is worth noting as a sign of Gonzalez's new faith in his artistic powers that he joined the "Cercle et Carré" group in the early thirties and thus signalized his return to an avowedly avant-garde milieu after long years of withdrawal.) Henceforth he remains a sculptor of extraordinary force.

In the late twenties, prior to his active involvement with Picasso—prior, at least, to its effect on his own thinking—Gonzalez's work devolved upon two principal concerns. One was the use of flat sheets of iron that were variously cut and incised with the outlines of figures, heads, etc. Although technically such works must be classified as low reliefs, they are essentially drawings in which the metal sheet functions as a paper surface. Gonzalez's other concern at this time was with a species of figurative Cubism akin to some of Archipenko's earlier work. His sculptures in this vein—I am thinking particularly of "The Couple" (1927-29) and "Don Quixote" (1929), both shown at the Museum of Modern Art in 1956—are far more analytical, in both a conceptual and a plastic sense, than the sheet-iron reliefs. Each component of the figure is "abstracted" and purified into a negotiable plastic weight. The figure is then reconceived in terms of these weights while at the same time its identity as a figure is reënforced with both an anatomical and kinetic logic. Conceptually such work falls entirely within the Cubist ambience, but it seems nonetheless to lean in the direction of a completely "open" construction.

Gonzalez was at the same time very much occupied with the making of masks, and it was in these that his two interests of the late twenties—the cut-out forms of sheet metal and the analytical element in the figure sculptures—

24 Woman with Basket 1931

28 Head called 'The Tunnel' 1933

seem to converge. In part they reflect an interest in African and Japanese masks, which had long been admired in Parisian art circles. More importantly, they attempt to reconcile the use of cut-out metal forms with a stricter analytical conception of the face and head.

It would appear that in his collaboration with Picasso, Gonzalez found a way to extend this wedding of the analytical element with the use of cut-metal forms to the whole figure. In any event, his great works of the thirties all deal with the figure or the head. (None of them falls into the category of non-objective art.) One migth legitimately infer that the use of thin metal rods (and the other slender masses that distinguish his open-space sculpture thereafter) was employed first to depict the figure and secondly the head. There is already a clear suggestion of such a use in the "Don Quixote", Cubistic though it is; but more persuasively, the plastic affinity that logically obtains between a vertical construction of iron rods and the human skeleton would seem to give priority to the standing figure as a subject for this particular sculptural method.

In general, what we have come to regard at this distance in time as the tradition of open-form sculpture actually comprises two distinct sculptural genres. The first consists of sculpture that is constructed in such a way that its principal forms, whether made up of linear masses or flat planes, stand free in space, occupy it without illusion, and transform it in much the same way that the human body does. Such sculpture confers upon the space it occupies a sense of scale that has nothing to do with any plan, direct or implied, for imposing a plastic design on that space. Nonetheless, both to the eye and to one's nervous system its forms may be said in some way to "measure" this space, to charge it with a sense of possibility and a focus of interest. Sculpture of this type tends to be more linear and graphic than constructive. Its closest analogy is not with architecture but with the human figure; it endows its physical surroundings with the kind of visual and psychological sensations we experience upon seeing a figure enter an empty room or an uninhabited landscape. And it may be for this reason (that is, because of this psychological analogy with the human scale) that it tends to have a greater expressive cogency when approximating human size. On a smaller scale it tends to become an objet d'art, and thus lacks the ability to impose

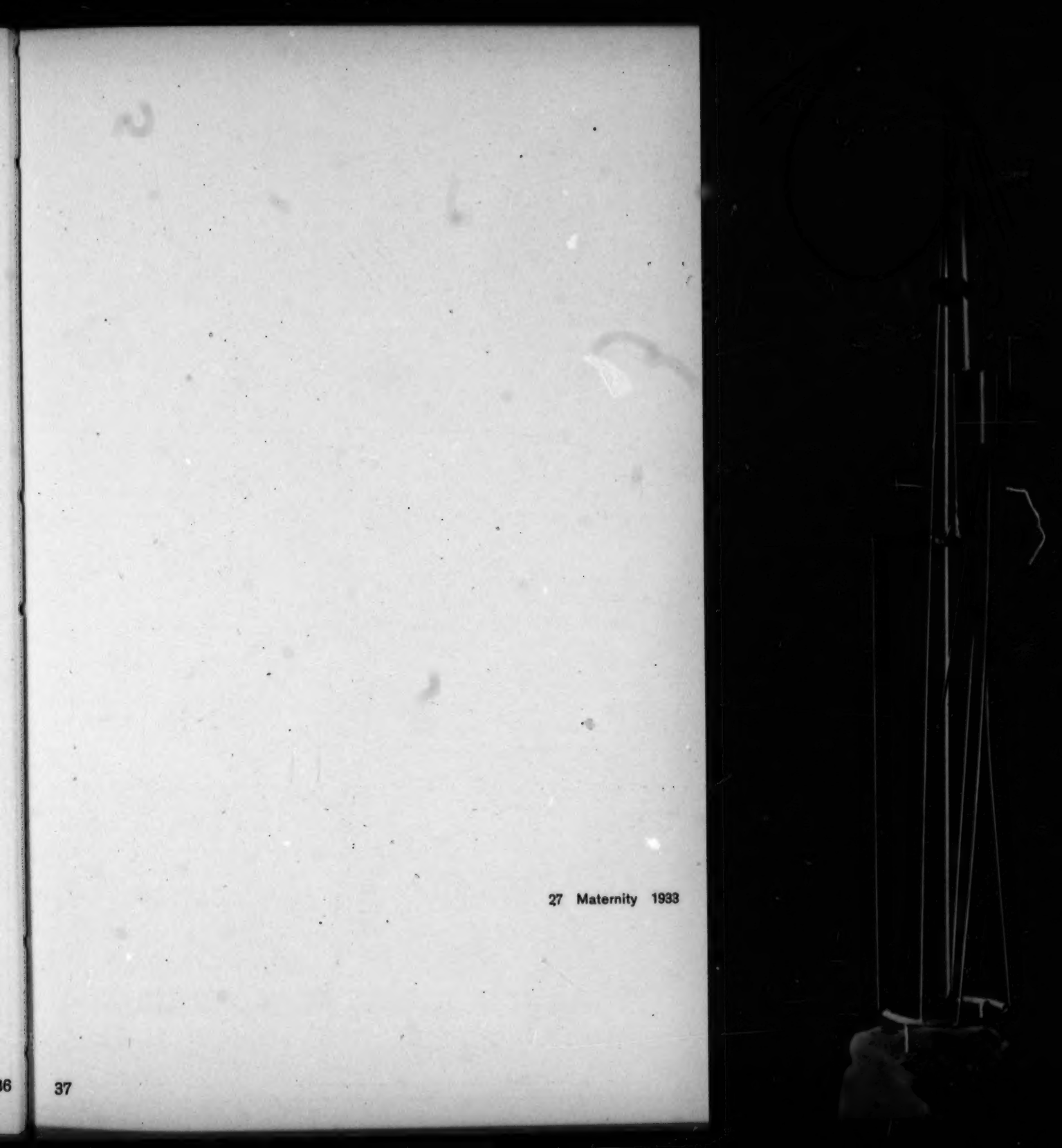
itself on the space it occupies; and on the larger scale it threatens to become an irresponsible species of architecture—which is to say, an architecture that imposes its physical presence but does not function. Just as easel painting turned into a form of pseudo-architecture when it ceased to be a "window" and became a wall, so sculpture promises to achieve a similar fate when it grows bigger than a man.

What sculpture of this genre does not do is divide, enclose, or otherwise order space in any rigorous, preconceived way. It does not "model" or "carve" space into a fixed imaginary mass. This is precisely what the second type of open-form sculpture does. It creates forms that are expected to contain space very much the way a pot contains water. Its argument (so to speak) with monolithic sculpture is one of means rather than ends, and its openness is really an illusion designed to create enclosures. Open-form construction is, for this second type of direct-metal sculpture, a technological rather than a syntactical necessity.

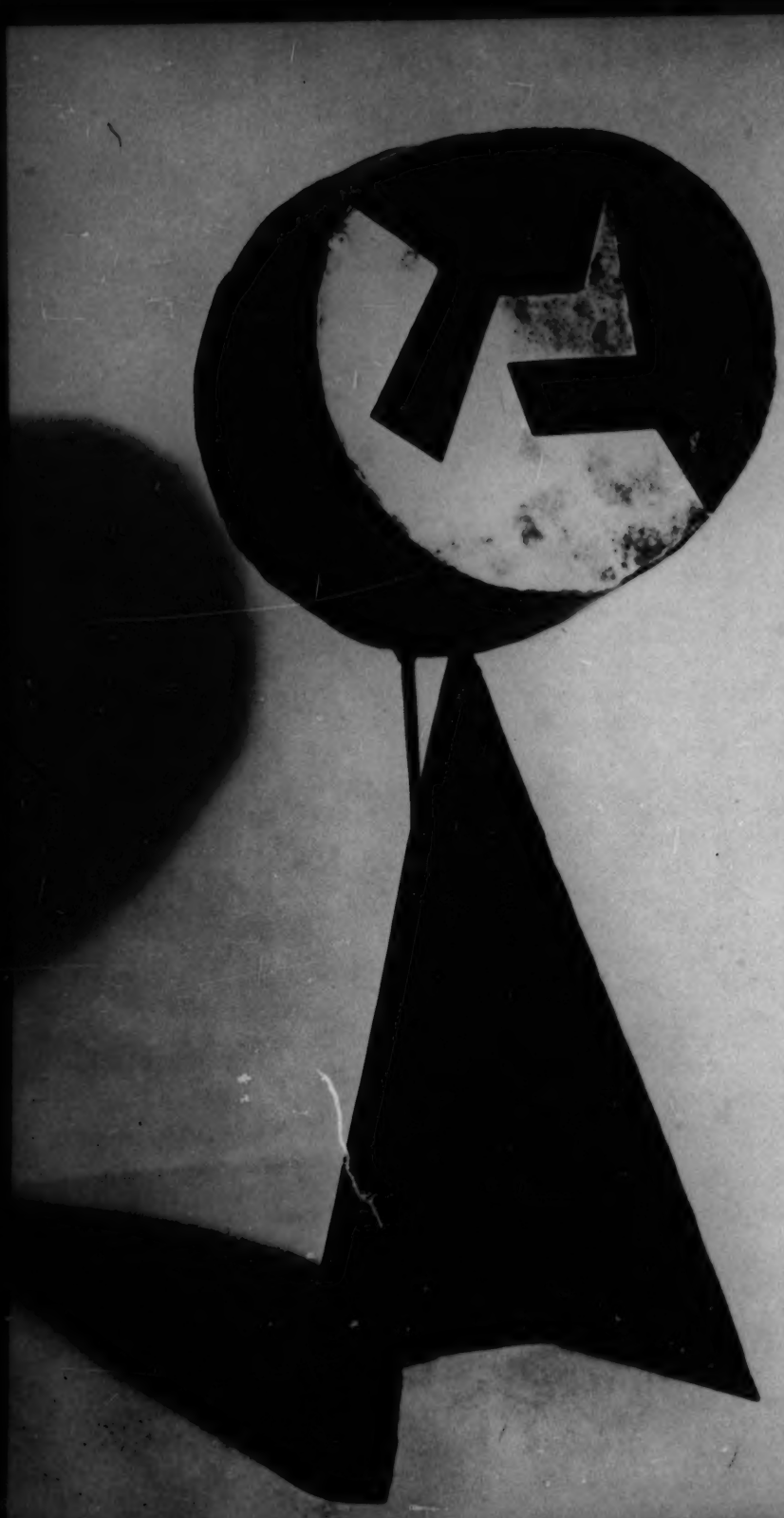
With few exceptions Gonzalez's mature work of the thirties falls entirely within the first of these two categories, and I should say that the most creative work of his successors in the open-form medium has done likewise for the very good reason that the second category is actually a pseudo-modernist compromise that commits itself to neither the expressive rigors of monolithic sculpture nor the syntactical demands of true open-form construction. In such works as "Woman Combing Her Hair", "Woman with a Basket", "Dancer with Disheveled Hair", "Maternity", "Elongated Figure", "Woman with a Mirror", and the "Cactus Man" sculptures, Gonzalez confronted the syntactical problem squarely and established the terms by which his followers have been able to carry on ever since.

How can one characterize Gonzalez's achievement in this open-form genre? How does it compare with the art of his contemporaries, and how does it look to us today from the vantage-point of an indebted but distant generation?

To answer the first question I would call attention to what may seem an irrelevant or incongruous connection: I refer to Gonzalez's affinity for the art



27 Maternity 1933



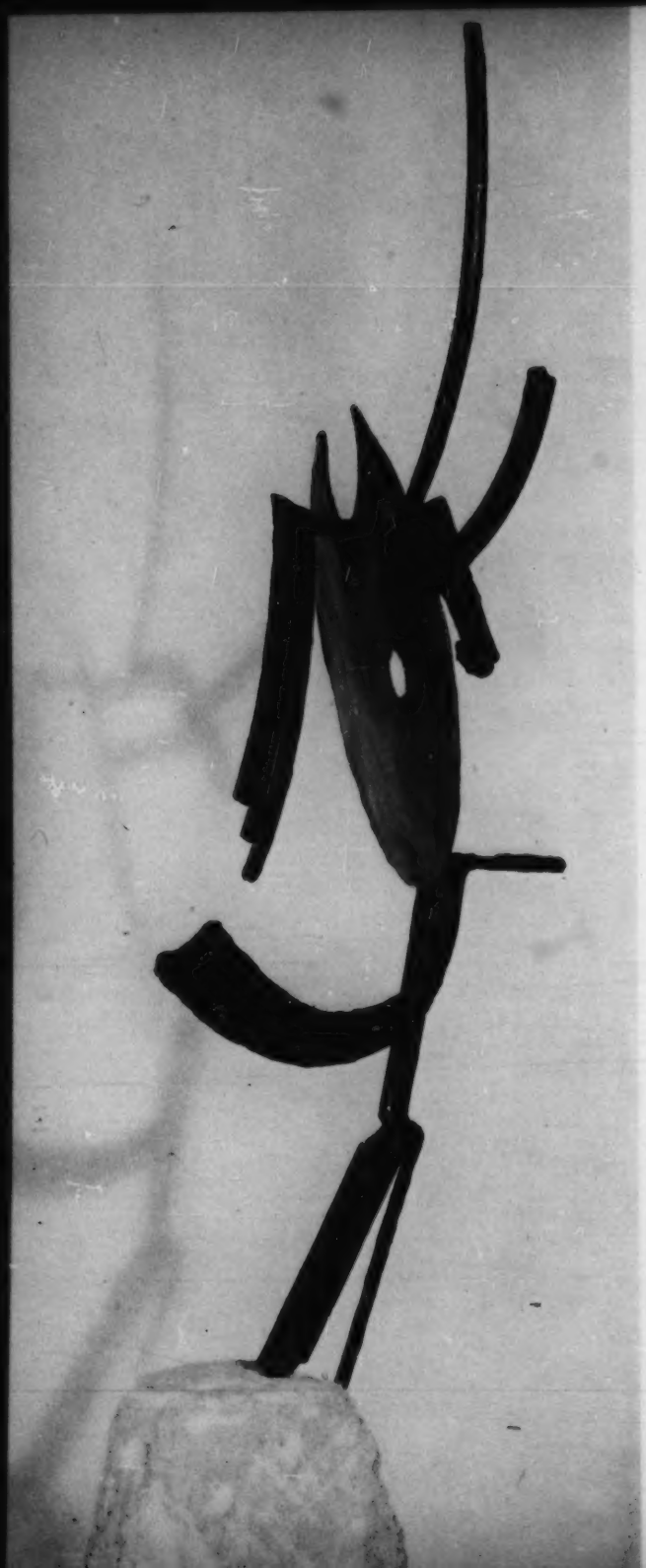
30 The Lovers 1933

of Degas. Contrary to the assumptions of modern criticism, the authentic styles of our time have been achieved by means of a deeply committed effort to realize certain subjects and themes, certain human preoccupations and obsessions, and in Gonzalez's case it was clearly the attempt to deal with certain classic themes of Degas—dancers, women combing their hair, women looking in mirrors, and so on—that led him to use his new sculptural technology in such an original way. The difficulty of relating his interest in these intimate and rather modest subjects to his mastery of a craft that seemed remote and inappropriate to their realization became the principal frustration of Gonzalez's artistic career, and kept him at painting long after his lack of accomplishment in that medium was evident. It is here, I suspect, that Picasso's influence was crucial. Gonzalez by himself lacked that touch of audacity, that flair for apprehending unlikely connections, that Picasso had in such abundance. In the matter of establishing a viable relation between the imagery that most closely absorbed Gonzalez's adult sensibility and the craft that he had had at his fingertips since boyhood, one may be confident that Picasso was the catalytic agent.

Moreover, Picasso's painting was at that time very much concerned with seated female figures conceived in a manner that made them easily transferable to the sculptural medium. (His "Woman in an Armchair" of 1929—reproduced on page 161 of Mr. Alfred H. Barr's "Picasso: Fifty Years of His Art"—is already an open-form sculpture in conception; the woman's head, especially, anticipates some later sculptures. It lacked only Gonzalez's technique to be realized as such.) The particular distortions that Picasso had introduced into his rendering of the female figure were surely another determining influence on Gonzalez's sudden fusion of his theme and method.

Gonzalez's sculpture was pictorial, then, in a double sense: in imagery it derived from his emotional affinity with Degas and in syntax from the graphic distortions of Picasso. The latter gave him his cue for drawing-in-space the subjects he derived from the former. The final element necessary for effecting his total expression was the technology based artistically on the practice of collage and technically on the use of the oxy-acetylene torch.

I shall speak presently of the uses to which some of Gonzalez's contemporaries put the practice of collage in developing new sculptural ideas, but it is



29 Dancer called 'à la Palette' 1933

31 Head called 'The Cagoulard' 1934

necessary to distinguish here the several uses to which Gonzalez himself put it. In what I should call his major mode—the linear sculptures of figures—Gonzalez makes use of the joinery aspect of collage (or what Mr. William Seitz now calls "assemblage") but he does not linger over it. It is a means only. The aim is to build a structure that is as graceful and free in its movement, as continuous and uninterrupted in its delineation of an image, as an expert line drawing. Metal parts are joined together in the effort to translate a pictorial idea into a free-standing sculpture that is, in effect, a constructed drawing-in-space. In what I should call his minor mode—e. g., "The Kiss" (1930) and the several "Head" constructions of 1932 that are composed largely of flat sheet-metal forms—Gonzalez maintains a closer alliance with the collage idea. Not only as a means but as a sculptural end they retain the plastic character of collage. They are incidentally closer than anything else in Gonzalez's œuvre to the work of the Russian Constructivists a decade earlier.

I would myself place a great deal of importance on Gonzalez's involvement with the figure, on his attempts to realize a deeply felt and highly specific image, in explaining the success he achieved in raising his tall linear sculptures out of the realm of collage and placing them firmly in a new sculptural province. It is worth remembering that Gonzalez did not consciously lead an aesthetic rebellion, but on the contrary, applied his innovations of technique to the realization of an inherited imagery. He arrived at his radical style very much as he arrived in Paris, surrounded on every side by affectionate attachments to the past.

The transformation of sculptural syntax that was successfully completed by Gonzalez in the early thirties constitutes a climactic chapter in the whole revival of sculpture that took place in the wake of the Cubist revolution. The particular form Gonzalez gave his tall figure sculptures very shortly separated them from orthodox Cubist practice and transferred his art to another expressive realm altogether, but his achievement must nonetheless be seen in a context of related developments, particularly if his relation to his contemporaries and successors is to be fully appreciated.

60 Head of a Woman 1936

36 Little Seated Woman 1934

Cubism—and specifically the Cubist collage—gave rise to some very diverse sculptural ideas. One need only name the brightest stars in the constellation of sculptors who derive in one way or another from the Cubist matrix—and from the variety of attempts to adapt, revise, and transcend it—to indicate the enormity of this creative debt and the range of its artistic consequences. Not only Picasso and Gonzalez but Lipchitz and Laurens; Gabo, Pevsner, and Tatlin; Moholy-Nagy and Vantongerloo; Archipenko and Boccioni; Miró, Calder, and Smith; Butler and Lassaw; Jacobsen and Müller; Chillida and Ferrant . . . One's list could trail on through the crowded sculptural history of the past half-century and be a long time exhausting the names of all those artists who have paid the most significant kind of homage to the Cubist idea: the kind that yields a living art and creates a usable and flexible convention.

The growth of the collage into a constructed relief of flat planes was but the first logical step in a development that led eventually to quite different modes of free-standing sculpture. At every stage in this development something central and animating in the aesthetics of sculpture in our time came into existence. Parisian Cubists such as Lipchitz and Laurens transfered to the sculptural realm that elegant analysis of form—a virtual dialectic of plastic relations confronting and mastering new feelings and experience—that had long been the glory of French painting. The Russian Constructivists drew a quite different, less purely "aesthetic" implication from identical plastic materials. Living through an epoch of unprecedented political upheaval, when inherited forms in every sphere of intellectual life seemed as doomed as the social regime that had given them sufference, they seized upon the purity and idealism of science and technology as an exalted new basis for both art and life. The Constructivist style as it emerged in Russia in the years following the Revolution was a heroic attempt to relate the aesthetic purity of Cubism to the moral and intellectual purity of a new technological culture. This effort was continued by Moholy-Nagy and his circle in Germany, and stands in dramatic contrast to the work of Boccioni and Miró, who, in their different ways, turned the Cubist inheritance to other purposes, the one forcing upon it the visual dynamism of urban conflict and speed, the other imposing the psychological wit and impurity of his own far-

37 Head of a Man (Monthyon) 1935

82 Drawing
for Sculpture
1939

cical consciousness. As the styles of these and other disparate personalities came to flower, each uniting a specific existential source with a common formal matrix, still other artists adapted their burgeoning repertory of sculptural concepts to still different ends. Our sculpture today continues, for the most part, to live—or die—by the same repertory of ideas.

Gonzalez's place in this intricate (and at times bewildering) history is a major one, and it will be instructive, I think, to compare it with the careers of two of his most accomplished contemporaries: Lipchitz and Gabo. For Gonzalez's achievement is unique not only when set against the sculpture of the past but even—and perhaps especially so—when placed beside the work of artists who pursued similar goals.

Lipchitz's early stone carvings came directly out of Analytical Cubist painting and collage; they comprise what are perhaps the purest examples we have of the fixed relations of a painted surface—a surface only just removed from the landscape of Cézanne—translated into the more literal plastic relations of three-dimensional carving. If these carvings (I have in mind the work of 1916-18) are more sculptural than the painting from which they derive, it is only in a literal and not a conceptual sense. Not until he creates his open, "transparent" sculptures of 1926-30 does Lipchitz postulate a new conceptual basis for his work: a basis that very clearly, but briefly, establishes his art in the realm of open-space sculpture on the eve of Gonzalez's collaboration with Picasso. Whereas his earlier stone carvings had preserved the monolithic plane relations of Analytical Cubist painting, Lipchitz's "transparencies" resulted from the cutting and opening up of flat, slender masses into narrow strips—he worked in wax later cast into bronze—until they too became as linear and airy as drawing. Just why Lipchitz chose to abandon this pioneer effort at drawing-in-space remains one of the unresolved problems in modern sculpture. When he turned to a more consciously heroic style from the thirties onwards, a style heavy with baroque rhetoric and mythological pretensions, he completely rejected his open-form accomplishments. Regarding himself more and more as heir to the grandeur of Rodin, Lipchitz has apparently never considered his "transparent" style as a fit vehicle for the kind of monumental subjects that he has chosen to make his special province over the last three decades.

43 Seated Woman I 1935

44 Seated Woman II 1935

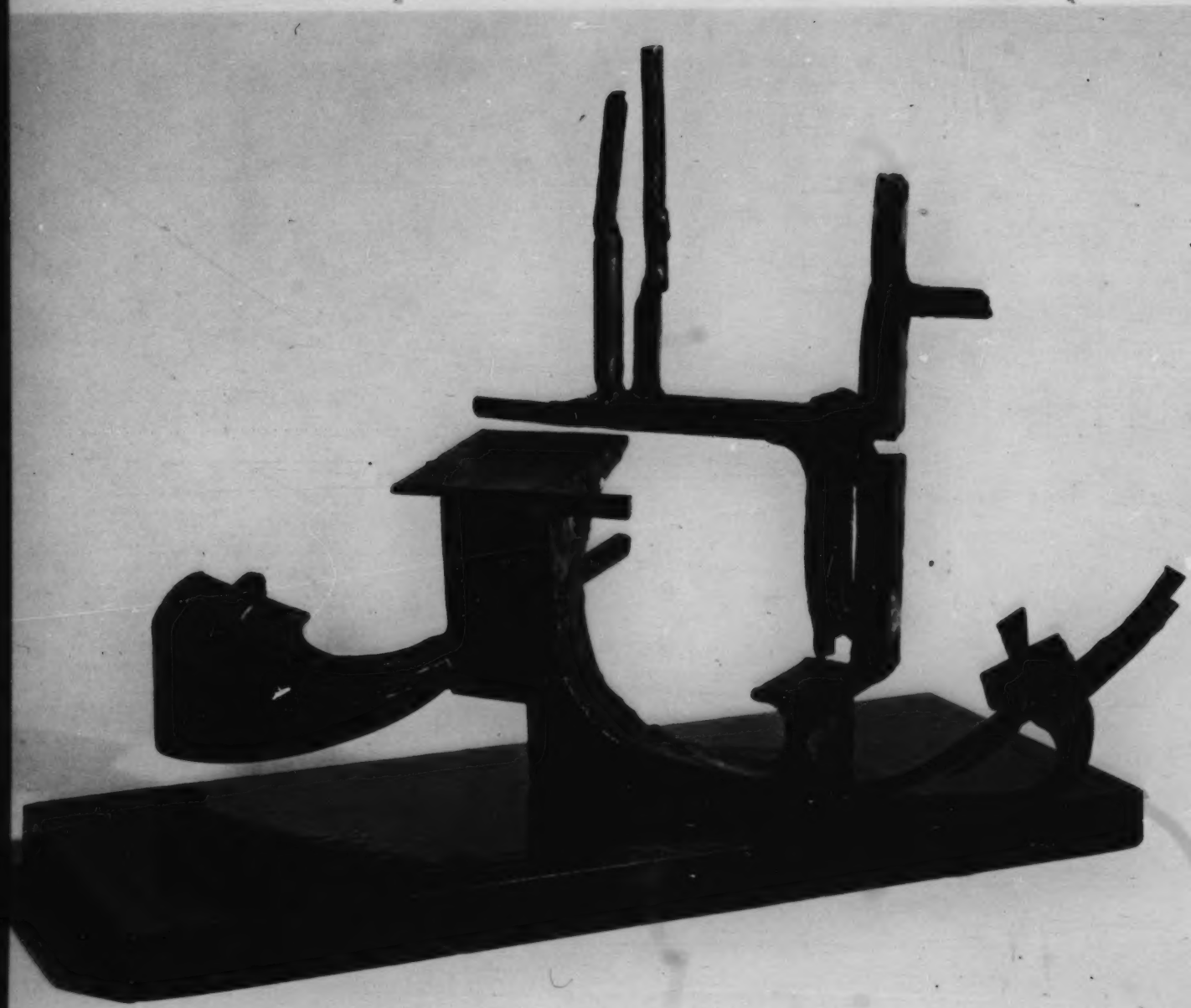
Whatever personal reasons may have determined Lipchitz's course, the significance of his decision in this matter goes beyond purely personal considerations; it presents us, as I say, with an unresolved problem, and one that is by no means unrelated to Gonzalez's later development. A conscientious critic of this phase of modern sculpture will be obliged to confront the problem again—specifically: the hesitancy felt by most of the pioneer creators of open-form sculpture to undertake monumental and socially meaningful themes without recourse to closed-form methods—in dealing with Gonzalez's "Montserrat". It is a fact that Gonzalez, like Lipchitz, turned away from the open-form style when he addressed himself to a heroic, socially-oriented subject. The "Montserrat" is a noble and moving work. It does not in any sense represent a "retreat" from the more radical open-form sculptures Gonzalez had already made; there is no failure of nerve here. It was made concurrently with some of his most dazzling open pieces. The most one can say, I think, is that when the impact of the Spanish Civil War drove him to this subject, he could not see it in terms of the style he had developed to render more delicate and personal themes.

Gabo avoided this dilemma by taking his art in another direction altogether, but in a direction which remains attached nonetheless to the collage-construction matrix. His early work is, like some of Lipchitz's and Gonzalez's, a testing of Cubist procedures in three-dimensional terms, but then his interest in plastics—symbolic of the new technological era he conceives his work to represent—provides him with a quite different means for opening up the whole constructive process to light and space. Compared to Gabo, one sees how firmly Gonzalez remained an artist of the museum, a Spaniard, after all, whose dialectic of taste and culture remained attached to his native inheritance on the one hand and the cosmopolitan values of the School of Paris on the other. The "future" we glean in the art of Gabo is another world.

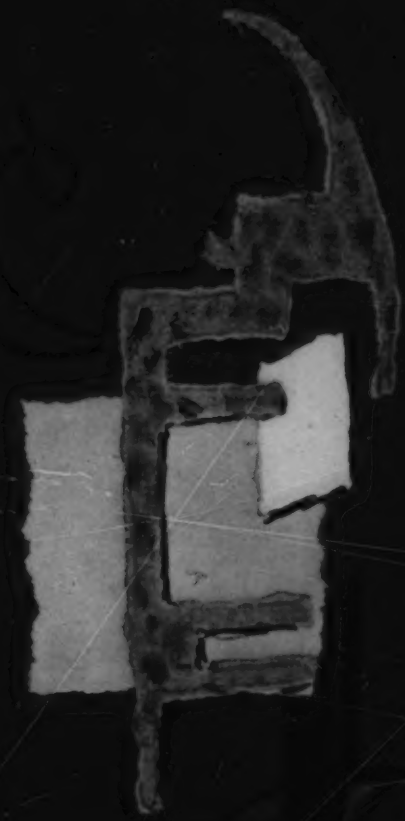
And today?

We seem to be surrounded by Gonzalez's heirs. His continuing influence is evident wherever one glances at the art scene here or abroad. As I have suggested earlier, he enjoys a double status as both a contemporary and

45 Little Venus 1935

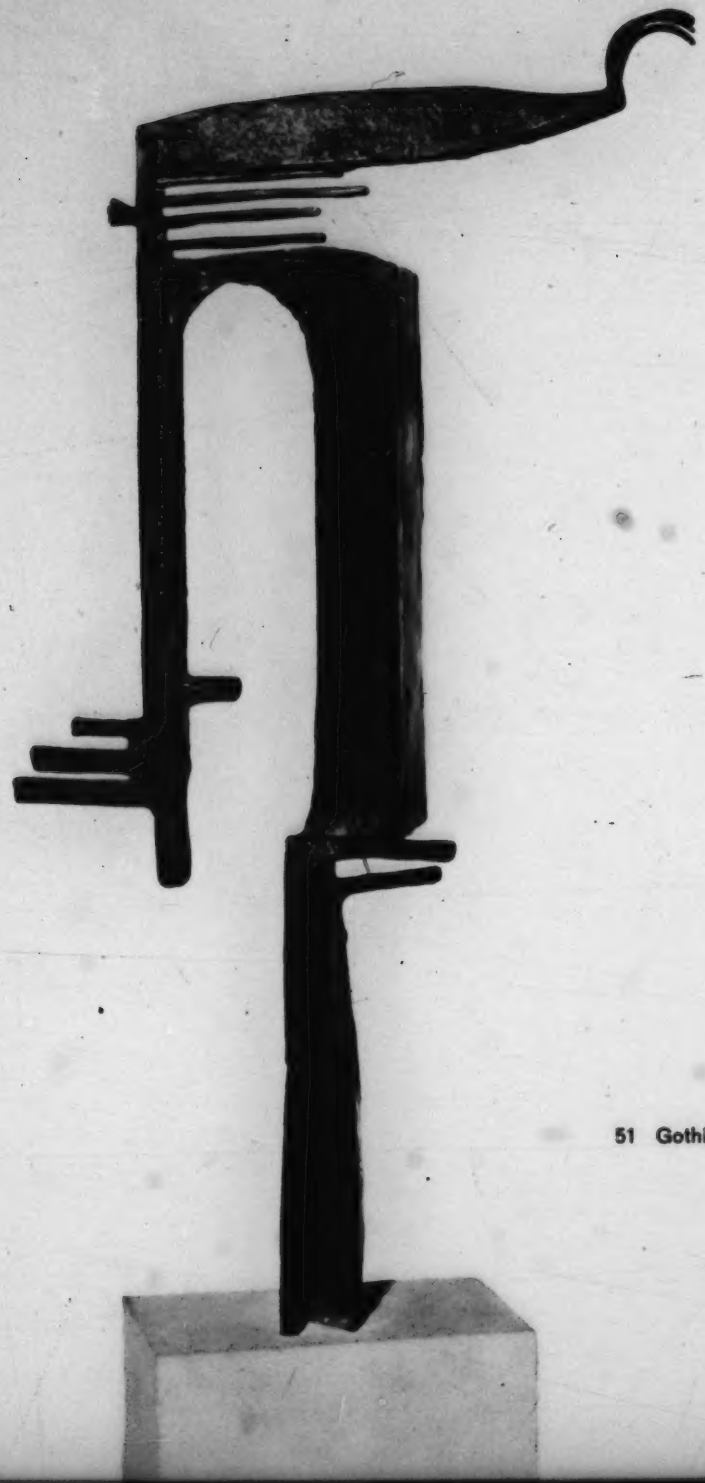


41 Elongated Figure 1935



75 Drawing
for Sculpture
1937

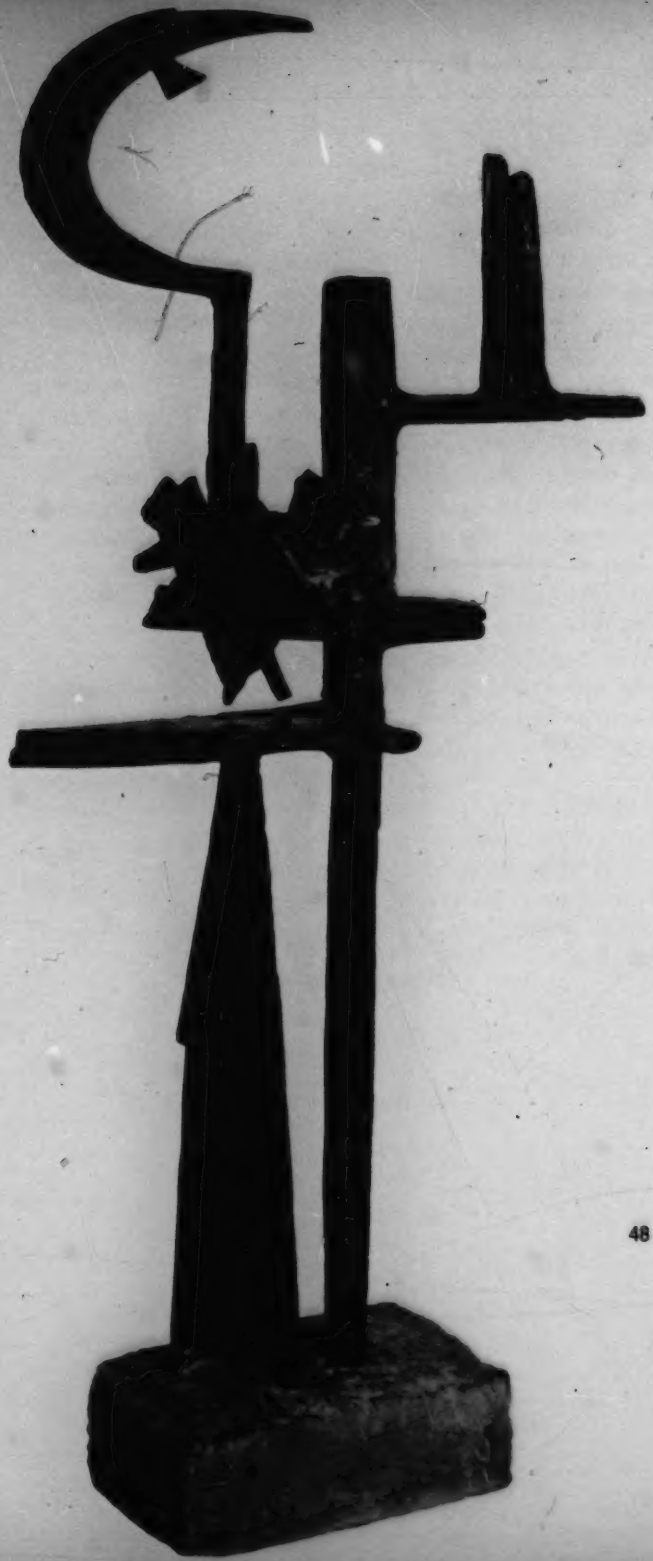
47 Woman with a Mirror 1936



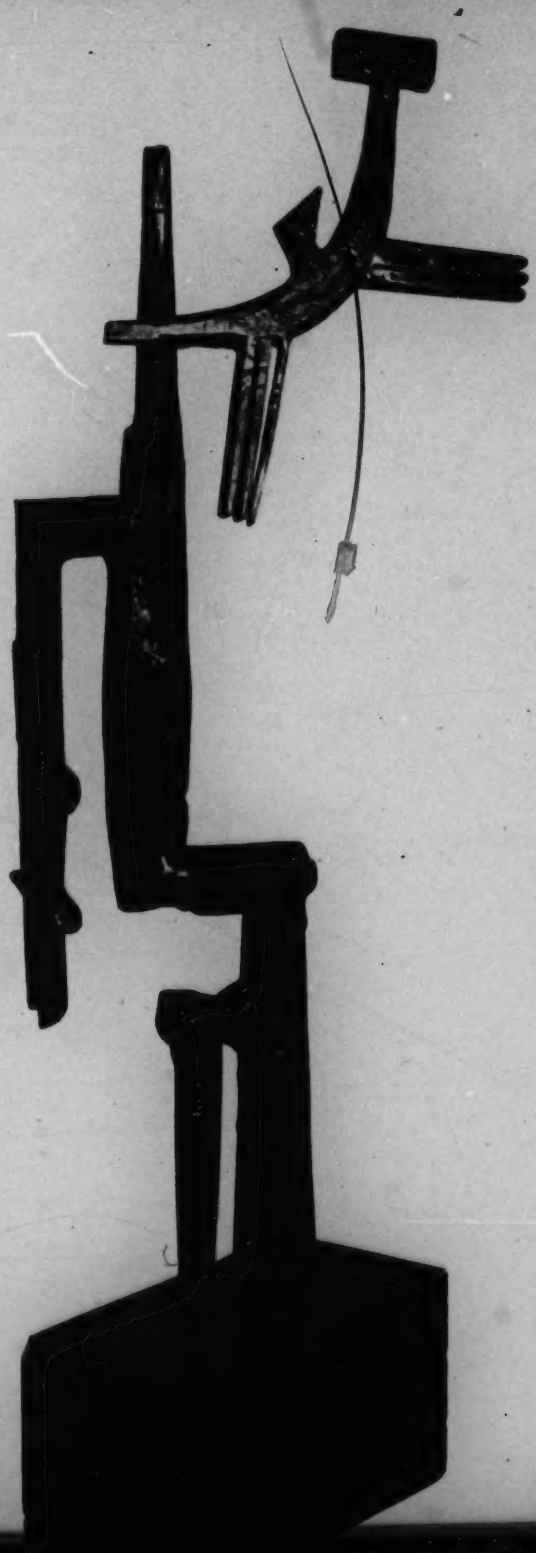
51 Gothic Standing Man 1937

an historical monument. One reason for this status, I think, is the unusual relation that currently obtains between new sculpture and its historical sources. Sculpture today maintains its connections with the past to a degree that is not true of painting. It lives in an easier aesthetic commerce with its own roots and precedents, and is less willful (and less worried) about departing from them for the sake of novelty and sensation. The very technical nature of the medium itself imposes perhaps a conservatism, a spiritual brake, that is nonetheless real for being unacknowledged.

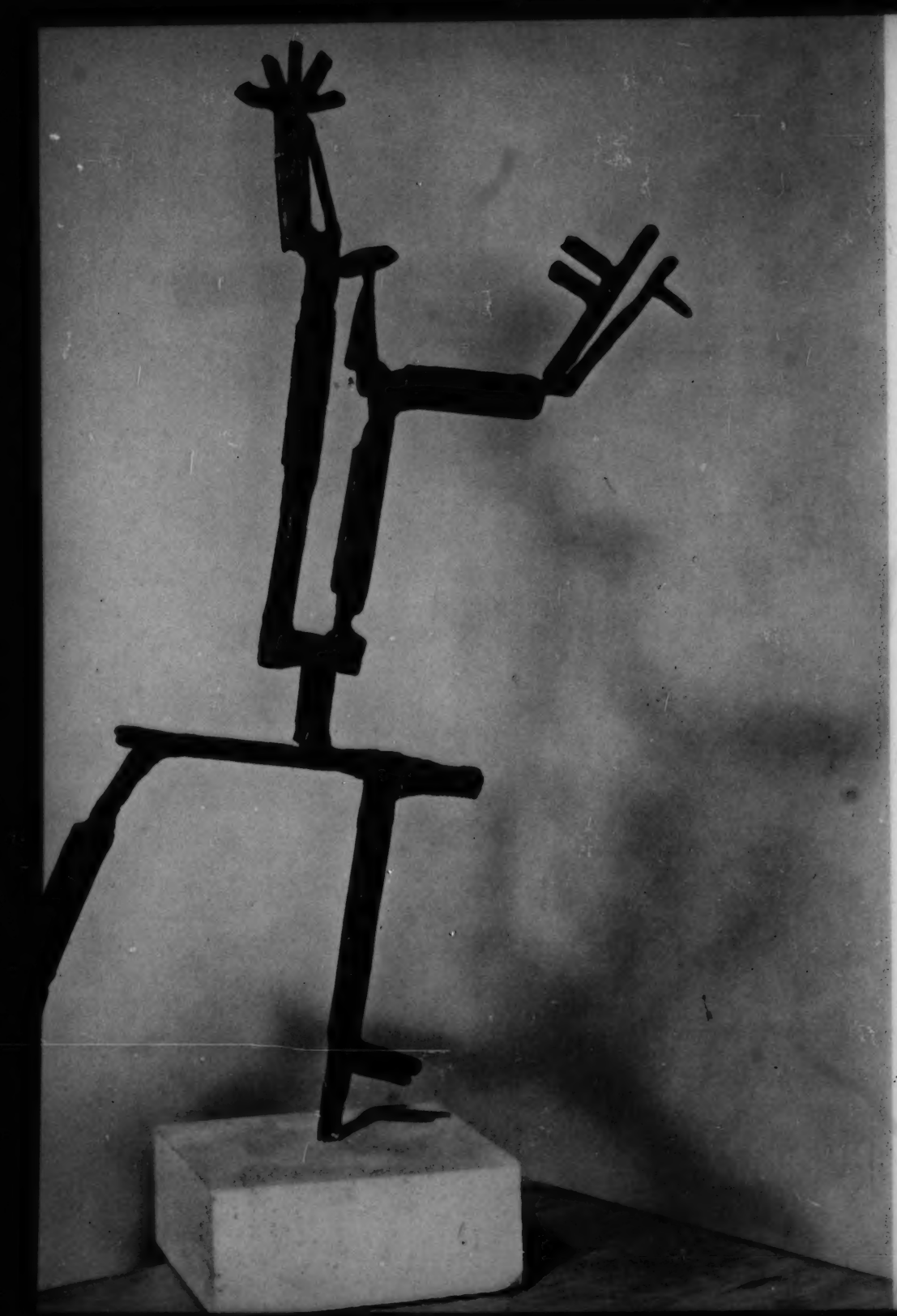
But another and perhaps deeper reason for Gonzalez's continuing influence is the very narrowness and depth of his art. He did not aspire to a universal vision. He never lost his modesty. He accomplished something very particular and concrete, and he left a great deal undone. His imagery was personal, his method purposeful. Gonzalez is not one of those geniuses who consumes all the air there is to breathe, leaving behind followers who can only cough and choke on what remains. He never exhausted his ideas. When younger men drew on his example and method, they found there was still a great deal to achieve in the genre Gonzalez had laid before them. Gonzalez's principal successor in America, Mr. David Smith, had only to apply a different and more various image-making faculty to Gonzalez's method in order to open up a new realm of possibilities. There is nothing imperious in the art of Gonzalez. In the end one is impressed more by the sensibility of his work than by any doctrine or program. Beyond his innovations and departures, beyond his place in art history, it is this sensibility—modest, full of doubts, but finally very exact and triumphant in its aims—that keeps Gonzalez's art living in the present.



48 Figure called 'The Big Sickle' 1936



49 Figure called 'The Small Sickle' 1937



52 Dancer called
'à la Marguérite' 1938

72 Drawing for Sculpture
1936

CHRONOLOGY

1876 Julio Gonzalez is born on September 21 in Barcelona where his father and grandfather work as goldsmiths.

1892 Father Gonzalez, who is also a sculptor, teaches Julio and his older brother Joan, the art of metal work. Later both boys enter the School of Fine Arts in Barcelona where they take up painting.

1893 Julio and Joan exhibit metal work for the first time at the Barcelona International Exhibition and win a gold medal for their efforts.

1900 Julio exhibits his metal work at the International Exhibition of Chicago.
The Gonzalez family moves to Paris. Julio becomes an intimate friend of Picasso whom he already knew in Barcelona, and associates himself with the group of artists and writers around Picasso such as Manolo, Max Jacob, Gris, Appolinaire, Maurice Raynal and others. He produces a great number of pastels which show various influences, and devotes himself chiefly to painting. Around this time he also produces his first metal masks, which already show his mastery of this material.

1908 Joan Gonzalez dies. Julio is deeply affected by the loss of his brother with whom he had a close relationship and withdraws from his friends as well as his work. Picasso and Brancusi are the only two poeple he sees from time to time.

1926–1927 Slowly resumes work. He is uncertain whether to concentrate on painting or sculpture and is tortured by self-doubt, which continues for many years. Then decides definitely to abandon painting and to concentrate on sculpture. His first forged iron sculptures, as well as masks and still lifes in cut-out iron date from this period.

1928 Gonzalez gains more and more confidence in his ability to handle metal. He frees himself from the cubist influence which inspired his early sculpture and begins work on a series of heads and figures (The Poet, Don Quixote, etc.).

1930–1931 Gonzalez gives Picasso technical assistance on his welded iron sculptures. At the same time his own style of work changes. His figures become more and more abstract. He exhibits his new work at the Galerie 'Le Centaur', Brussels.

1931–1935 Gonzalez discovers a new way to 'project and design in space'. Space, not form, become his main interest for a while. He produces Woman with a Basket, Woman Combing her Hair, Maternity, Head with a Mirror, etc. Exhibits this new 'work in space' at Galerie Percier and Galerie 'Cahiers d'Art', Paris.

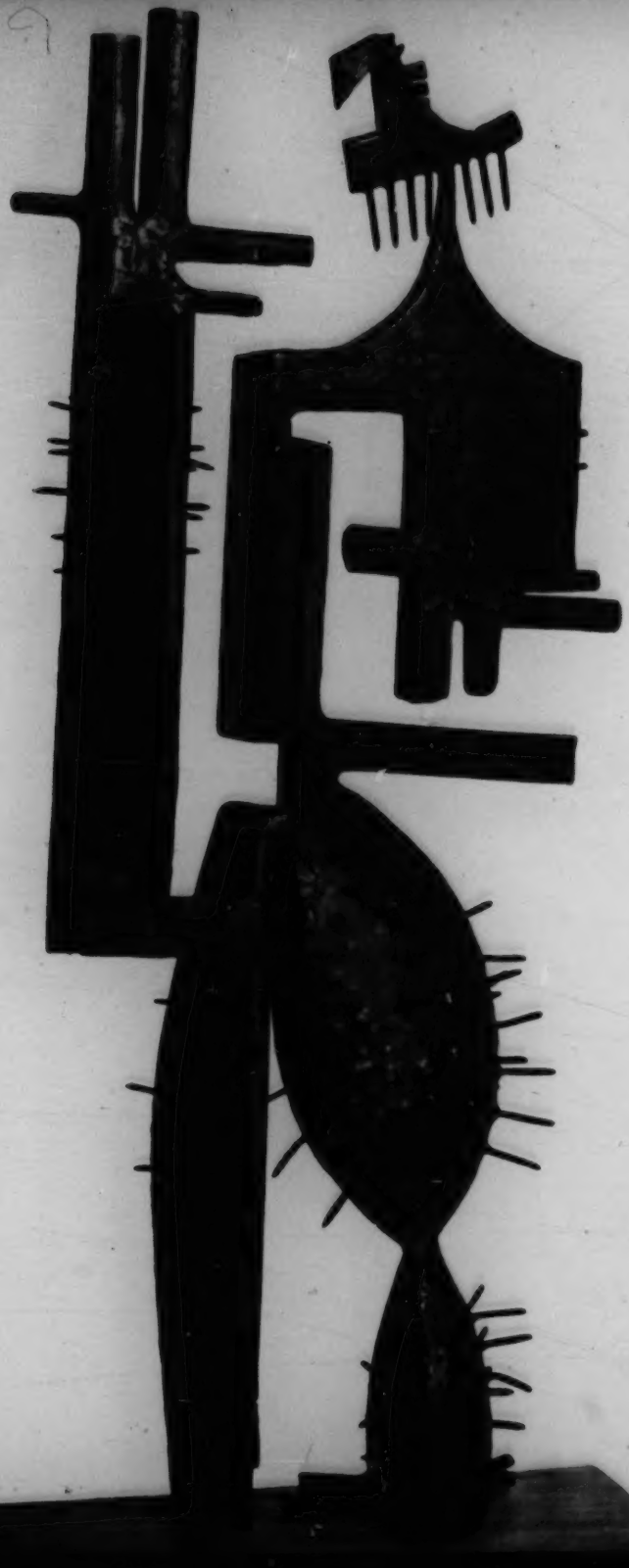
1932 Joins the constructivist group which was organized in Paris by the Uruguyan painter Torres-Garcia under the name of 'Circle et Carré'.

1937–1939 Gonzalez returns to more compact 'form'. Produces the 'Montserrat' which is exhibited in the Spanish Pavilion of the World Exhibition in Paris in 1937. The two Cactus Man, Woman with Mirror, etc. date from that period.

1940 Due to the shortage of oxygen and acetylene caused by the war, Gonzalez is forced to give up working in welded iron. He hopes to finish some of the already started work after the war and concentrates in the meantime on drawing and modeling in plaster.

1942 Begins work on the plaster of a second Montserrat, which he sees as a kneeling, screaming woman, and which is to be his indictment of the horrors of war.
He dies on March 27 in Arceuil, outside Paris, leaving his Montserrat unfinished. The plaster head of the Montserrat is later cast in bronze in accordance with the artists wishes.
Eventually bronze casts are made of certain sculptures in plaster, friable stone and iron as the artist had desired.

50 Large Venus 1937



53 Cactus Man I 1939–1940

54 Cactus Man II 1939–1940

56 Abstract Figure 1942

57 Head of 'The Montserrat II' 1942

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CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBITION*

SCULPTURE

1	Little Maternity 1912–1914	Bronze	8¾"
2	Mask called 'Alberta' 1912–1914	Bronze	6"
3	Anxious Mask 1912–1914	Bronze	8¾"
4	Mask called 'Egyptian' 1912–1914	Bronze	9⅞"
5	Kneeling Nude 1919	Embossed copper	10 x 6¾"
6	Mask of Roberta 'in the Sun' 1927	Iron	7¼"
7	Little Baroque Mask 1927	Iron	5"
8	Little Maternity 1927	Cut-out iron	8⅜ x 5"
9	Japanese Mask 1928	Bronze	7⅛"
10	Head called 'The Poet' 1929 Collection: Hans Hartung, Paris	Cut-out iron	9⅞"
11	Kneeling Woman 1929	Cut-out iron	7¼ x 5¾"
12	Still Life 1929	Cut-out iron	7⅛ x 10½"
13	Pensive Face 1929	Cut-out iron	9⅜ x 7¾"
14	Don Quixote 1929	Bronze	17"
15	Mask of Pilar 1929–1930	Cut-out iron	7½"
16	Pointed Head 1930	Bronze	11"
17	Reclining abstract Head 1930	Bronze	9¼"

* Gonzalez dated only few of his works. The dates given in this catalogue were supplied by the artist's daughter, Mme Roberta Gonzalez, and must be considered as only approximate. In dimensions height is preceding width.

18	Spanish Mask 1930	Bronze	5¾"
19	Abstract Mask 1930 Collection: Hans Hartung, Paris	Iron	8¼"
20	Head of 'Oncle Jean' 1930	Iron	15"
21	Head called 'The Rabbit' 1930	Iron	13"
22	Oval Mask 1930–1935	Cut-out iron	7⅛"
23	The Dream 1931	Iron	26½"
24	Woman with Basket 1931	Iron	71"
25	Woman Combing her Hair 1931	Iron	48"
26	Head of the 'Little Montserrat' 1932 Collection: Hans Hartung, Paris	Iron	13"
27	Maternity 1933	Iron	52¼"
28	Head called 'The Tunnel' 1933	Bronze	18½"
29	Dancer called 'à la Palette' 1933	Bronze	30½"
30	The Lovers 1933	Bronze	17⅜"
31	Head called 'The Cagoulard' 1934	Bronze	9"
32	Double Face 1934	Bronze	8½"
33	Figure called 'The Giraffe' 1934	Iron	37½"
34	Head with a Mirror 1934 Collection: Hans Hartung, Paris	Bronze	23¼"
35	Reclining Head I 1934–1935	Bronze	6 x 7½"
36	Little Seated Woman 1934	Bronze	5½ x 9⅛"
37	Head of a Man (Monthyon) 1935	Bronze	5½ x 10⅛"
38	Head of Reclining Man 1935	Bronze	9½"
39	Small Reclining Head 1935	Bronze	4¼"
40	Mask 1935	Bronze	7¾"
41	Elongated Figure 1935	Iron	9⅞ x 12½"
42	Little Dancer 1935	Bronze	6⅞"
43	Seated Woman I 1935	Iron	46¾"
44	Seated Woman II 1935	Bronze	34¼"
45	Little Venus 1935	Bronze	8⅛"

46	Mask of the Crying Montserrat 1936	Bronze	12"
47	Woman with a Mirror 1936	Iron	82"
48	Figure called 'The Big Sickle' 1936	Bronze	20¼"
49	Figure called 'The Small Sickle' 1937	Bronze	9⅜"
50	Large Venus 1937	Iron	11½"
51	Gothic Standing Man 1937 Collection: Hans Hartung, Paris	Iron	20⅜"
52	Dancer called 'à la Marguérite' 1938	Bronze	18½"
53	Cactus Man I 1939–1940 Collection: Hans Hartung, Paris	Bronze	26"
54	Cactus Man II 1939–1940	Iron	31½"
55	Mask called 'The Monk' 1940–1942	Bronze	6⅜"
56	Abstract Figure 1942	Bronze	13"
57	Head of 'The Montserrat II' 1942	Bronze	12¼"

ENAMELS

58	Still Life 1936	Enamel on copper	5⅞ x 3¾"
59	Head of a Woman 1936	Enamel on copper	5⅞ x 4½"
60	Head of a Woman 1936	Enamel on copper	5¼ x 4"
61	Abstract Head (Pendant) 1936	Enamel on copper	2¾ x 2⅜"
62	The Kiss	Enamel on copper	4 x 3⅜"

PASTELS AND DRAWINGS

63	Seated Nude 1910–1914	Pastel	9¾ x 6⅜"
64	Standing Nude 1910–1914	Pastel	12¾ x 8"
65	Study 1910–1914	Pastel	9¾ x 12¾"
66	Study for Nude 1910–1914	Pastel	12¾ x 9¾"
67	Standing Nude 1910–1914	Pastel	12¾ x 9¾"

68	Study for Nude 1910–1914	Pastel	12¾ x 9¾"
69	Crouching Nude 1910–1914	Pastel	15⅜ x 11"
70	Drawing for Sculpture 1936	Crayon and Ink	8¾ x 11⅛"
71	Drawing for Sculpture 1936	Mixed Medium	11 x 7½"
72	Drawing for Sculpture 1936	Crayon and Ink	9½ x 6¼"
73	Head 1936	Ink and Watercolor	11⅛ x 6⅝"
74	Head of a Woman 1936	Watercolor and Ink	13¼ x 8½"
75	Drawing for Sculpture 1937	Collage	13⅛ x 10"
76	Drawing for Sculpture 1937	Crayon and Ink	13¼ x 8⅜"
77	Cactus Man 1938	Crayon and Ink	12 x 7⅞"
78	Personage with Spheres 1938	Crayon and Ink	14 x 11"
79	Drawing for Sculpture 1938	Crayon and Ink	12⅞ x 10"
80	Drawing for Sculpture 1939	Watercolor and Ink	12¾ x 9¾"
81	Dancing Cactus 1939	Crayon and Ink	12¼ x 7⅞"
82	Drawing for Sculpture 1939	Crayon and Ink	12¾ x 9⅞"
83	Drawing for Sculpture 1939	Ink and Watercolor	12⅜ x 9½"
84	Drawing for Sculpture 1939	Ink Wash	9⅞ x 12⅞"
85	Drawing for Sculpture 1939	Crayon and Ink	12¾ x 9⅞"
86	Drawing for Sculpture 1939	Ink	14⅛ x 10¾"
87	Drawing for Sculpture 1939	Crayon and Ink	12¾ x 9½"
88	Drawing for Sculpture 1939	Ink and Watercolor	12½ x 9½"
89	Head 1939	Ink and Watercolor	15¾ x 12"
90	Drawing for Sculpture 1939	Mixed Medium	10⅜ x 7½"
91	Drawing for Sculpture 1938–1940	Ink Wash	9½ x 6¼"
92	Drawing for Sculpture 1940	Ink Wash	12¼ x 9½"
93	Drawing for Sculpture 1940	Mixed Medium	9½ x 6¼"
94	African Mask 1940	Ink	12½ x 9½"
95	Drawing for Sculpture 1940	Ink Wash	12 x 9½"
96	Head of the Crying Montserrat 1940	Ink Wash	10⅜ x 8¼"

97	Austere Mask 1940	Ink Wash	10½ x 7¼"
98	Head 1941	Ink Wash	10¾ x 6½"
99	Drawing for Sculpture 1941	Ink and Watercolor	12⅛ x 9⅜"
100	Personage with Book 1941	Ink Wash	12¼ x 9⅜"
101	Drawing for Sculpture 1941	Mixed Medium	9⅞ x 6½"
102	Drawing for Sculpture 1941	Crayon and Ink	12⅜ x 9⅜"
103	Drawing for Sculpture 1942	Ink Wash	8¾ x 7⅜"

This book has been printed in a limited, numbered edition of 2000 copies.
The first 16 copies, numbered from I to XVI, contain a special folder with an original drawing by Julio Gonzalez signed and dated by the artist.

This copy is number

№ 646